A Dissertation
on Menstruation
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A dissertation upon Menstruation

Menstruation is a monthly discharge which takes place from the uterus, of every healthy woman, whose genital organs are well formed, on her arrival at the age of puberty. At this time the organs of generation develope themselves completely. The uterine vessels, which are "serpentine and peculiarly tortuous", straiten themselves and become enlarged in their caliber, in proportion to the enlargement of the organs, through which, they are distributed. In this rapid developement of the parts, subservient to the function of generation, a much greater supply of blood, is required from the general circulation.
This increased quantity of blood is derived from the spermatic, and hypogastric arteries. The structure of the uterus, and the circuitous direction of its vessels, is admirably adapted, for the retention of the blood until the all important secretion of the menstrual fluid can be accomplished.
That the menses are a secretion, I infer from the uterus being analogous to a gland in its structure, and from the difference found to exist, between this fluid, and blood drawn from any other part of the system. The secretory action of the uterus, has been ably, and satisfactorily established by the present Professor of

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the practice of medicine in this university. The first flow of the menses appears to be dependent on the venereal propensity, from the following facts. 1st we know the venereal appetite increases the temperature of the genital organs, and this increased temperature must be owing to the greater determination of the blood to the uterus at that time. 2nd No woman has been known to menstruate, without previously having experienced the desire of the male. 3d "women of a robust constitution, and a libidinous nature" menstruate much more copiously" 4th In many animals of the inferior order, the discharge from the vagina, which at the commencement, was nothing but a mucous secretion, becomes tinged with blood when the venereal propensity suffers a violent exacerbation." Thus sanguineous evacuation, would certainly, never have made its appearance, had a free and uninterrupted intercourse with the male, been permitted. This bloody discharge observes monthly returns so long, as the female is deprived of the society of the male.

In like manner I infer, that, as the first evacuation from the human vagina, is colourless, thin, and returning at irregular periods, it becomes gradually regular in its periods

and bloody, in consequence of the continual irritation kept up in the uterus, by the venereal propensity, which, produces a new action in that viscus. It is a fact well established, that a natural and perfectly healthy action existing in any part of the system, may become entirely changed in every respect, by causing an unusual determination of blood to its situation. In this manner effusions of blood take place, in persons who die of apoplexy. In some cases blood is found effused in the cavity of the cranium, when the rupture of no vessel can be discovered, here the healthy action, is converted into a diseased one, and the vessels instead of their natural secretion pour out blood. Since it has been ascertained that such important changes, may result, from such trivial causes. Is it not rational to suppose, that, whatever occasions a greater flow of blood into the uterine system, is the cause of this periodical evacuation? The venereal appetite is known to cause a great determination of blood to the organs of generation, and in proportion to the quantity so determined, and the length of time it is detained in the uterus, must be the impression, made upon the vessels concerned

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in the menstrual secretion. From these premises, it is evident, that the venereal incalescence does produce the flow of the menses. It may be demanded if this was the case, why are there not instances of women, who having indulged their first propensities never menstruate? To this I answer, that, it is so extremely rare to find a female, who, indulges her first propensities freely, and regularly, that the discharge will come, and "habit am second nature" will establish its periods and fixed returns. I recently make the same observation respecting Courtesans whose passions are under no restraint, in them, the habit having been very early acquired, still observes its monthly rounds.

The uterus appears in a peculiar manner, to be, under the all powerful influence of habit, when an action, has once taken place in it, there is a remarkable predisposition for its return. This has frequently been observed by Accouchers in women, who have once miscarried, no matter what length of time, may have elapsed from the abortion till the subsequent pregnancy, the woman is still very liable to suffer the same misfortune, at the same time of her

gestation are of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible],
it is extremely difficult to break the operation of [illegible] actions
which originate from accident.

Whether [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the uterine [illegible]
was the cause of menstruation, why are all [illegible] or
[illegible] subject to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] that time.
or why do they menstruate [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] painful, from [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
of the great [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
system of nerves over all the range of organs [illegible]
they [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] that they [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] adjoining [illegible].

To prove the influence of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
the whole system [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the
absence of menses.

Since the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] by [illegible] as the seat of our emotions, [illegible]

It happens that the introduction of a [illegible] in a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

of the fetus in utero. [illegible]

measures, during the early [illegible]

direct sympathy existing between the [illegible]

uterus. If the uterus be [illegible]

[illegible]

the uterus appears to be [illegible]

[illegible] of the mother cannot be [illegible]

[illegible]

But as the child increases in size [illegible]

[illegible] upon the mother, a release of [illegible]

[illegible]

The causes seem to result [illegible]

[illegible], or to be of special [illegible]

[illegible]

1st As the ovaries result from the [illegible]

that [illegible]

2nd When the ovaries are diseased [illegible]

[illegible], or not at all.

3rd If the [illegible] the age of puberty

the ovaries entirely dissimilar to the testes. The ovaries have been subjected to many influences in opposition to the uterus and it appears ever takes place.

From the distribution of the nerves and bloodvessels of the ovaries and testes being exactly the same, and derived from the same source in both sexes, we may rationally suppose there exist a similar influence upon their respective organs of generation, and furnish them with that power by which their development is effected. Form further draw into the opinion that they must act on each other in a similar manner upon their respective genital systems, from the identity of the nerves, to which they are subject. They are both liable to dropsy and tetanus, which affections are direct opposition to that healthy action of the system necessary to the reproduction of the species.

By the sympathy existing between the ovaries and the uterus, we are enabled to explain their influence in menstruation.

If there is much metastasis in any part of the

generative system that first becomes a centre of parasitic growth
when all the organs are in their prime, and this in
proportion to the activity of the part in question, of this
increased determination of blood to the organs of most active
the secretory action of the whole circle of rest.
And here the analogy is supported by the circumstance
that in most cases of obstinate amenorrhœa the menses,
even the original seat of the disease
In some cases of amenorrhœa there exists an organic substance,
which prevents the flow of the menses. May not the infl
of the uterus form the membrane or substance in question
of a determination of blood to the ovaries? Since it
is evident the membrane does not be the cause of
appearance during its existence. As there is then, a mechanical
obstruction to its flow, consequently the formation of the
membrane is not incompatible with that hypothesis.
The same obstruction has been cited to prevent conception.
But the evidence is not, not of the function is notoriously
sensitive, since frequently bastard seem to merely a
respectable deviation in the present theory of conception.

[illegible] of the diseases of women [illegible]

[illegible] in consequence of which the other organs become [illegible]

[illegible] many of the diseases which have the effect [illegible] the adjacent organs. The [illegible] found [illegible] same cases of same order and the [illegible] to be attributable to the [illegible] of the ovary, yet [illegible] have [illegible] of the [illegible] of the ovary [illegible] of the [illegible] of the [illegible].

This evidence may be drawn from examining [illegible] in [illegible] of the [illegible] organs, the [illegible] [illegible] to that of [illegible] [illegible] obstruction, there are [illegible], their [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] but evident marks of disease.

From the above premises it appears that the indication [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] to the health of the system, as to prevent the secretion of the menses

increased mental action is more [illegible] generally the subject [illegible] of [illegible] other [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] sensibility and affections of the organs [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] over the whole system, but [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] under the influence of the [illegible], [illegible], are evinced by their frequent occurrence in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] prohibit marriage. [illegible] [illegible] particularly of [illegible] [illegible] this fact, in a religious sect in Kentucky [illegible] Shakers [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] opposed to marriage [illegible] of their tenets. In 18[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] a celebrated quack empiric in curing cancers, which he affirmed were so frequent among the women that one of their principal men purchased his important secret at an enormous price. The women of this sect have all a pale unhealthy appearance, arising no doubt, from their abstemious mode of living. The cessation of the menses has been supposed to predispose the system to cancer of the breast, if this is the case, is it not rational to conclude that the frequent appearance of Cancers, in the breasts of the females of the body above

alluded to, is caused by the derangement of the menstrual secretion, which derangement originates from the nice observance of their rigid and pernicious laws?

May not the final cessation of the menses be attributed to the gradual decay of the system, and the consequent want of energy in the uterine fibres?

This cessation is frequently the prelude to many diseases, which may originate from the sympathy existing between the uterus, and the other viscera. The discontinuance of an action in a part endowed with much sensibility, predispose not only that part to disease, but those likewise in direct sympathy with it.

In the phenomena of the cessation of the menses, we may again advert to the ovarian influence, so soon as the ovaries have all been impregnated or have lost their susceptibility for impregnation, the uterine cells and sinuses having no power to stimulate them into action, collapse, and become no longer able to receive the blood, in such quantities as formerly.

The ovaries must impart to the uterus the power to conceive, and the desire of that object which is to consummate conception. — Thus the ovaries fit the uterus for conception, and are the

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cause of the venereal appetite, which, I have endeavoured to prove is the cause of menstruation.

From the foregoing premises, I conclude that the sanguine flow from the human vagina, like, that from the vagina, of the inferior animals depends upon exacertation of the venereal appetite and that it has regular periods established by habit.